

Alaska State Legislature



Official Business

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska
99801-1182

March 3, 2000

Federal Caucus Comment Record
C/O BPA-PL
707 West Main Street, Suite 500
Spokane, WA 99201

We are writing in response to the Federal Caucus' draft report *Conservation of Columbia Basin Fish* otherwise known as the "All-H Paper".

After reviewing the report, we are deeply concerned about the proposed harvest restrictions for Alaskan fisheries outlined in Alternatives "B" and "D". These Alternatives will result in drastic reductions and perhaps the complete elimination of Alaska's sport and commercial king salmon harvest for up to 10 years.

Over the last thirty years, Alaska's troll fleet has reduced its harvest of king salmon from 304,000 per year to as low as 146,000 per year. Fishing seasons have been reduced from 160 days to 11 days. In the last ten years alone, the total value of the Southeast troll fishery for king salmon has dropped from \$12.5 million to \$3.7 million per year.

Southeast Alaska's sport fishing quota is established as a percentage of the state's total chinook cap; therefore, these fisheries have also been curtailed. Harvest restrictions constrain fishing opportunity for resident Alaskans and have a negative economic impact on our commercial sport charter industry.

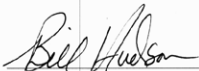
These reductions in quota and fishing time were not implemented in an effort to recover stocks in Alaska, but instead in an effort to conserve Columbia Basin stocks.

When we consider the minimal effect Southeast Alaska's king salmon fisheries have on recovery of Snake and Columbia River salmon, we are further perplexed by your proposal to request additional harvest restrictions. Fishing mortality rates pale in comparison to mortality rates caused during downstream migration and inter-dam loss as adult fish return to spawn.

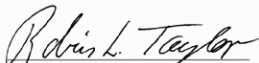
In examining Snake River Fall Chinook mortality, we find that the National Marine Fisheries Service allows the federal dams to kill up to 99% of juveniles and up to 30% of adults. In all, hydropower is responsible for up to 95% of human-induced mortality, while Alaska fisheries are responsible for only about one-quarter of one per cent of total human-induced mortality. Clearly, the impediments to recovering this stock are not related to Alaskan harvest.

Lastly, we note that in December of 1999 the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a biological opinion affirming that the harvest levels of the Pacific Salmon Treaty meet the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. In other words, Alaska is already meeting its obligations and responsibilities for recovery of endangered salmon in the Columbia Basin.

We contend that Alaska's fisheries have not caused the serious salmon declines in the Pacific Northwest and furthermore that our fisheries are not a significant contributor to the current situation. In short, we will not support efforts to further curtail Alaska's king salmon fisheries.



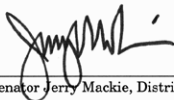
Rep. Bill Hudson, District 4



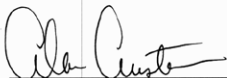
Senator Robin Taylor, District A



Rep. Bill Williams, District 1



Senator Jerry Mackie, District C



Rep. Alan Austerman, District 6



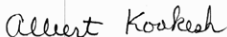
Senator Kim Elton, District B



Rep. Ben Grussendorf, District 2



Rep. Beth Kerttula, District 3



Rep. Albert Kookesh, District 5